Licencing of Pathology laboratories

3437. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether authorities establishing pathological laboratories require to obtain permission/licence from the concerned Government agencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof with number of laboratories issued licence during the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that Indian laboratories are now extending their pathological services to overseas clients/hospitals by getting the samples tested in the laboratories here and electronically dispatching the reports;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) what safeguard are taken in the disposal of the imported samples to ensure that they do not prove to be health hazards for India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Health being a State Subject it is for the State Governments to regulate the establishment of pathological laboratories.

(c) to (e) Some of the Indian Laboratories either directly or through their authorized importers or service providers have started extending their pathological services to the over-seas clients. For this purpose they are required to submit their applications to the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for seeking necessary permissions. For certain cases involving human biological material, opinion of Indian Council of Medical Research is sought by the Office of the DGFT, which is given by ICMR after due consideration of such cases by a Committee constituted for the purpose. Further, Pathological laboratories come under the preview of the Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules 1998 and have to follow these rules for treatment and disposal of all kinds of Bio-medical wastes.

Stem Cell Research Promotion

3438. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that stem cell is the future medicine;

(b) whether it is also a fact that various players in the world are very eager to invest in India in the field of stem cell research;

(c) the reasons for which Government are not quickening its pace on research in the field of stem cell research;

(d) whether any guidelines on ethics has been prepared in this respect; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Stem Cell research, although still in its infancy, has emerged as a cutting edge science hoping to make medical breakthroughs for meeting health needs of both the developed and developing countries. It is one of the promising areas of biotechnology for "Regenerative Medicine" providing tools to repair or replace tissues or cells damaged by injuries or diseases like heart diseases, stroke, spinal injuries, diabetes mellitus, parkinson's disease, alzheimer's disease, retinal degeneration and muscular dystrophy etc.

(b) Yes, Sir. Various countries including US, UK, Korea, China and Singapore have shown interest is having collaborative activities in the area of stem cell research.

(c) The Government has taken action for the promotion of research in the field of stem cell research and India has emerged as one of the major countries involved in Stem Cell Research. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research around 15 institutions and three premier health centres in the country are involved in stem cell research and related activities. Some of these are:

- The Institute of Immunohaematology, Mumbai under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) undertaking peripheral blood stem cell therapy in aplastic anaemia patients;
- The All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi involved in clinical studies on stem cell therapies particularly in cardiovascular disease;
- The L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad successful in

transplanting a stem cell derived cornea to a patient who had lost his cornea;

- The National Brain Research Centre, Gurgaon involved extensively on neural stem cell useful in several congenital and acquired disorder, including Parkinson's disease;
- The National Centre for Cell Sciences, Pune has been working on developing a repository of cell cultures and cell lines, cryo-preservation technology for bone marrow and development of skin for burns and vitiligo patients.
- The ICMR are also setting up various blood stem cell banks.

(d) and (e) Draft guidelines on regulatory aspects of stem cell research was prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research in 2002 and put on the ICMR web site for public consultation. The draft guidelines are being finalised on the basis of suggestion received and referring available International Policy documents on the subject. The proposed guidelines suggest constituting a multidisciplinary National Apex Committee to monitor Stem Cell Research activities in the country. Centres involved in stem cell research should be registered with the committee.

Malaria Medicine

†3439. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to make malaria medicine more effective for eradication of the disease;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are carrying out research on this medicine; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Chloroquine is

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.